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New York

President:	Mr. Skoog	(Sweden)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Dah
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Michon
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2018/649)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2018/649)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/649, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chambas.

Mr. Chambas: I am honoured to be here today to introduce the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/649) on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

Since my last briefing (see S/PV.8156), positive developments, in particular on the democratization front, have been competing with the volatile security situation, in particular in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. The spillover of the Malian crisis is increasingly affecting Burkina Faso and the Niger. Terrorist groups continue to cause devastation throughout the region, despite ongoing counter-terrorism operations. The complexity of recent attacks is a worrying outcome of West African and Sahelian Islamic groups reinforcing their linkages. The expansion of extremist activities has had a devastating impact on local communities. Local insurgencies are also spreading, exacerbating intercommunal conflicts and undermining State authority.

Allegations of human rights violations by security forces are particularly concerning as they undermine our collective efforts. I call upon Governments of the region to prevent such violations and to bring perpetrators to justice. UNOWAS and its partners, including the Office of Counter-Terrorism, are supporting dialogue on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, and have been advocating for the involvement of more women and youth in those efforts.

In the Lake Chad basin, despite gains made by the Nigerian armed forces and the Multinational Joint Task Force, Boko Haram's Islamic State's West African Province remain active. Attacks in south-east Niger have recently increased, including on 1 July with the killing of 10 soldiers from the Niger. The trend of Boko Haram using female suicide bombers continues, and reportedly almost one in five suicide bombers is a child. The most recent attacks on a Nigerian military garrison in Yobe state and the ambush of a military convoy in Borno are the most recent manifestations of the threats still posed by Boko Haram.

There is a need to provide increased support to diplomatic, security and humanitarian responses to Boko Haram in a holistic manner. To that end, UNOWAS is providing technical support for a joint summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States, on 30 July, as called for by resolution 2349 (2017).

The severe depletion of Lake Chad has led to environmental degradation, socioeconomic marginalization and insecurity for 45 million people. An estimated 2.3 million people remain displaced by the aggregate effects of insecurity, weak governance and climate change. I urge Member States to support the humanitarian response to the Lake Chad crisis, which remains critically underfunded, as well as the revitalization of the Lake Chad basin.

Violence between farmers and herders is increasingly a major security threat in the region and risks morphing into the terrorist attacks that have defined the security landscape. Farmer-herder conflicts are becoming more sophisticated and deadlier, especially in Nigeria's Middle Belt. During four days in June, new spates of attacks and retribution killings between herders and farmers in that region resulted in scores of deaths.

Let me stress that any military response to security challenges in the region needs to be matched by the implementation of comprehensive strategies linking security and humanitarian interventions to development and human rights initiatives. There is

also need to increase our collective efforts to address the challenges facing the Sahel region with actions that combine politics, security and development. In that regard, we have repositioned the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and developed a United Nations support plan to mobilize resources for the 10 UNISS countries. I call on Member States, partners and other stakeholders in the Sahel to provide desperately needed financial resources to the region.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea increased during the reporting period. Drug-smuggling and the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including by terrorist groups, pose major security threats. I welcome the ongoing efforts of the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa and the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre to strengthen their operational capabilities. I also note the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to establish a framework for enhanced cooperation with the Maghreb and Sahel countries in the fight against trafficking and transnational organized crime.

The demarcation of the Cameroon-Nigeria border and the pillar construction continue to face challenges due to insecurity in areas affected by the presence of Boko Haram and unrest in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. Nevertheless, pillar construction is expected to resume at the end of the rainy season.

The period under review saw an upsurge in popular discontent in the region, manifested through often violent demonstrations calling for political and economic reforms. The sometimes violent conduct of security forces, notably in dealing with popular demonstrations, has also fuelled political tensions. The commitment of countries of the region and support from the international community will be key to ensuring the effectiveness and accountability of security sector institutions as part of broader security sector reform efforts.

Several countries continue to struggle with justice, national reconciliation and human rights challenges. Among those is the concerning number of high-profile arrests, judicial prosecutions and convictions against political and civil society actors. We must collectively continue to urge Member States to provide an enabling environment for the exercise of the freedoms of expression and assembly, which are critical to consolidating democracy and good governance. In a recent positive development, Benin and Burkina Faso abolished the death penalty, which makes nine countries in the region that have ended capital punishment.

Since my last briefing, the region has continued on a positive trajectory of democratic elections with local elections in Guinea, local and municipal elections in The Gambia, and presidential, legislative and local elections in Sierra Leone. While they were well organized and voting took place in a mostly peaceful atmosphere, the critical pre- and post-electoral phases were marred by tensions. Let me commend the role of the electoral observer missions of ECOWAS, the African Union, the Commonwealth, the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie in defusing tensions.

Looking forward, we continue to closely monitor the situation in countries with forthcoming elections, such as Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal. The continuing political crisis in Togo has already caused the suspension of the parliamentary elections that were due to take place in July. We welcome ECOWAS mediation efforts to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the political impasse. In some countries of the region, including Nigeria, UNOWAS is working closely with ECOWAS and other partners to support the establishment of national peace architectures that can provide a systematic and inclusive approach to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

Democratic gains in the region are not immune to reversal. There is a need for democratic consolidation through genuine processes of national reconciliation, job-creating growth and inclusive sustainable development. That should be the focus of our international engagement.

In conclusion, let me assure members of the Security Council of the continued commitment of UNOWAS to working with all stakeholders and development partners in the region to promote peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel.

The President: I thank Mr. Chambas for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Dah (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head

of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for the quality of his briefing on the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/649), fully briefing us on the latest developments in the region and the activities carried out within the framework of the UNOWAS mandate.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the encouraging progress made in the region, particularly in the areas of democratic transition and governance, since the previous report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/1104). However, we remain concerned about the persistence of the multifaceted and complex challenges that threaten the stability and development of the subregion and the Sahel.

Indeed, in addition to terrorism and violent extremism, the region is also exposed to transnational organized crime, cross-border armed groups and the intensification of violent conflicts between nomadic herders and farmers. Moreover, the relative weakness of State institutions, which impacts the provision of public services, is exacerbating the already difficult living conditions of millions of people in the region. In order to mitigate the damaging consequences of those phenomena, it is important to adopt a comprehensive approach involving local populations and the Governments of the States concerned, regional organizations and the United Nations with a view to working collectively to find lasting solutions.

One of the major obstacles to the development of the region remains the insecurity caused by terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, Islamist groups, acts of piracy and armed robbery of the population. Initiatives to address those threats would therefore benefit from being accelerated and strengthened. My country supports and encourages the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to continue to take the measures necessary to ensure that the Joint Task Force reaches its full operational capacity. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's personal commitment to supporting the operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. I therefore urge donors to deliver on their financial pledges, which are essential to the ability of the Multinational Joint Task Force to play its full role. Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the efforts of the Task Force, the intensified interventions of which have cut Boko Haram's operational resources and scope of action in the Lake Chad basin.

With regard to security governance and the political situation, my country welcomes the progress made in security sector reform in The Gambia and Burkina Faso. My delegation also notes with satisfaction the peaceful democratic transition in Liberia, as well as the recent credible elections held in Sierra Leone. In view of the upcoming elections in several countries of the region, my country echoes the Secretary-General's appeal to national stakeholders to work together to ensure a level playing field and create a climate conducive to the organization of peaceful, inclusive and credible elections.

While the economic prospects of all West African countries are encouraging, more remains to be done to offset the low purchasing power of populations linked, according to the African Development Bank, to high levels of income inequality. In the Sahel, too, economic indicators do not inspire optimism. In addition, inequality, unemployment and the lack of opportunities further undermine the stability of the area. That is why my delegation endorses the analysis of the Economic Commission for Africa, which advocates addressing the root causes of the crisis, ensuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and offering investment opportunities in the Sahel.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, the alarming figures noted in the Secretary-General's report challenge and call on us to pool our efforts to find solutions to the plight of the 6.9 million people in situations of food crisis in the Sahel and the 2.3 million people displaced in the Lake Chad basin. Moreover, the resurgence of conflicts between farming communities and herders, especially in periods of transhumance, amplifies regional instability. With regard to the last point, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the initiative of UNOWAS and the Economic Community of West African States to develop a regional action plan on transhumance.

My delegation believes that only concerted, planned and coordinated joint action can effectively contribute to the stabilization of the Sahel region. In responding to the Sahel crisis, the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) will help support development processes, promote good governance and improve security. In that context, the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (2018-2022) aims to support efforts under way in the region to achieve sustainable development and realize the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. My delegation therefore urgently calls for the effective recalibration of UNISS, which will help us to emphasize the area's assets, on which its future will depend, while looking beyond the challenges it currently is facing. Moreover, gender issues, in particular women's role in peace processes, remain relevant, given the first-hand accounts we heard on the subject during the Security Council debate on women, peace and security in the Sahel on 10 July (see S/PV.8306).

The mission led by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed to South Sudan, Chad and the Niger clearly attests to women's determined call for their inclusion, representation and participation in peace processes, decision-making and governance mechanisms at all levels of society. My delegation therefore believes that it is important to encourage the countries of the region to create the conditions necessary for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) through the development and implementation of their national action plans, with a view to robustly involving women in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as peacekeeping.

A reading of the Secretary-General's report sufficiently provides us with insight into the security, humanitarian, governance and development issues prevailing in West Africa and the Sahel. In that regard, my country welcomes the work of UNOWAS and fully supports the activities of the Special Representative in the region. As a relevant preventive diplomacy tool, UNOWAS contributes significantly to crisis management and mitigation, while promoting dialogue and the implementation of reforms in the region. My delegation therefore firmly encourages the continuation and strengthening of the good offices of UNOWAS within the framework of frank and fruitful cooperation with national and regional partners, with a view to creating collective momentum aimed at sustaining peace and development. Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its full support for the work of UNOWAS and assures the Secretary-General of its support for his initiatives to achieve the goals of peace and sustainable development in West Africa and the Sahel.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that Côte d'Ivoire will continue its cooperation with the delegation of Sweden on drafting a presidential statement on the activities of UNOWAS to be submitted in the coming weeks.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation expresses its gratitude for the convening of this meeting and the important briefing by Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas.

Peru is deeply concerned about the violence, the insecurity, the presence of terrorist groups and criminal organizations, and the grave humanitarian crises affecting tens of millions of people in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin. We note that the root causes of the threats to international peace and security in those regions include poverty, the lack of development, climate change and insufficient State presence and capacity, among other factors, which fuel one another and are exploited by actors whose interests lie in fostering conflicts. We express our appreciation to and support for the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in its efforts to prevent a deterioration of the situation and in offering its good offices to various parties to the conflict. In particular, we would highlight three areas of work in which we believe that its efforts are essential to promoting sustainable peace in West Africa.

First, with regard to the political sphere, UNOWAS is called on to support the holding of free, fair and inclusive elections in Mali, Mauritania and Nigeria, which will depend to a great extent on fostering a stable environment to achieve the broad participation of citizens, especially women, young people and all political entities. UNOWAS is also playing a key role in post-electoral situations in The Gambia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, where reducing tensions and preventing the emergence or worsening of political crises are necessary. The same applies to Liberia, where it has also been called on to support the transition following the closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

Secondly, concerning security, we underscore the support that UNOWAS provides to the countries of West Africa in terms of security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants; promoting dialogue; and conflict prevention and resolution relating to the control of land at the local level.

Thirdly, with regard to development, addressing the root causes of conflict requires fostering sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which entails eradicating poverty, encouraging economic growth, justice and the rule of law, empowering women and

addressing the effects of climate change, among other goals. To that end UNOWAS is called on to play a key role in ensuring that various efforts, initiatives and actors, particularly those deployed on the ground, maintain political and operational coherence, while reflecting and responding to the circumstances, needs and priorities of every particular case. UNOWAS cooperation with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, as well as with other relevant United Nations agencies and subregional organizations, is also important. In that regard, we highlight its support for the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

In conclusion, while expressing our support for the vital role played by UNOWAS, we emphasize the need to provide it with the political and financial support that it requires to fulfil its important functions and mandates.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefing by Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWAS).

We begin our statement by highlighting the work and efforts of UNOWAS, headed by the Special Representative. It is necessary to underscore the work being done to strengthen the connection linking good practices, interactive dialogues, preventive diplomacy and strengthening cooperation and information-sharing among stakeholders, which have enabled peace and security initiatives, as well as national ownership and inclusiveness, to pave the way for consolidating peaceful solutions and good governance in West Africa. We commend the electoral processes and the peaceful transitions of power being realized in The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia, which illustrate the people's ownership and creation of institutions to end divisions and disagreements. We underline all the work done by UNOWAS in every one of those cases.

We believe that, in order to continue on the path of stabilization, the participation of each and every member of the international community is required. To that end, we include the roles that the United Nations, as well as regional and subregional organizations — including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Group of Five for the Sahel and other partners — have to play.

Despite that work, we are nevertheless aware that great challenges remain in the areas of security, governance, the rule of law and development in West Africa and the Sahel. As a main factor, violent conflicts have put the institutions of the countries of the region, and, consequently, their populations — 150 million people in all — at serious risk. We reiterate that it is crucial to look into the structural causes of the conflicts that have profoundly affected the volatile security situation in the region.

In that connection, we will tirelessly continue to make the point that the consequences of interventionism and regime-change policies following the 2011 conflict in Libya were among the causes that destabilized the Sahel, entailing chaos, terrorism, militarization and the tragic repercussions that continue to this day. The transfer of armed groups from Libya to the Sahel has also allowed the transfer of high-calibre weaponry being used currently to perpetrate attacks against national security forces, United Nations troops and personnel and civilian populations, in general.

Therefore, we cannot disregard the fact that the Sahel region suffers from increasing instability and insecurity due, as has been mentioned, to the presence of terrorist groups and violent armed groups and to criminal activities and transnational crime, which in turn pose a serious threat to the most vulnerable groups of the population. The crisis and the various conflicts have a direct and indirect impact on civilians, in particular women and children. Violence not only restricts their freedom of movement and economic activities, but also jeopardizes their lives and their future. The recruitment of children by armed groups continues and the participation of women in the dialogue and conflict resolution stages of conflicts has been stymied by their low level of involvement in dialogue leading to agreements. It is vital that women be included at all stages of the processes of dialogue and agreement.

The comprehensive implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel is therefore crucial. We commend the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (2018-2022), which we believe will strengthen synergies in addressing regional priorities.

In conclusion, we urge all States to address the issues faced by West Africa and the Sahel through regional and subregional multilateral cooperation and dialogue, and to work to strengthen measures to

effectively combat and eliminate violence of all kinds. Bolivia reiterates its full support for the regional and subregional architecture that serves to address conflicts in Africa because it believes that African vision, wisdom and culture must be reflected in the implementation of each initiative to bring about lasting peace in the region.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, we would like to reiterate our gratitude and support for Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas and his entire team for their good offices and ongoing efforts to bring about lasting peace in West Africa and the Sahel. We would also like to thank him for his briefing on the situation in the region, based on the comprehensive and detailed report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2018/649).

It has been exactly six months since we addressed the situation in the region of West Africa and the Sahel for the first time as non-permanent members of the Security Council (see S/PV.8156). It is with great regret that we note that the peace and security landscape remains bleak, owing primarily to instability and the increase in the number of terrorist threats and attacks in the region, which fuel criminal activities and transnational organized crime, such as trafficking in human beings. Such activities are a source of serious concern and pose a threat to economic, social and political stability in the Gulf of Guinea region, and this to Equatorial Guinea.

Threats from groups such as Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin — which, incidentally, just attacked and occupied a military base at the northern tip of Nigeria near Lake Chad — and the growing number of security challenges faced by Mali and its neighbouring countries must not be viewed as isolated threats or problems of concern only to areas directly affected; they must be addressed holistically as a threat to the entire African continent. That is why it is essential that national parties and international partners pool their efforts and generate synergies in the quest for a lasting solution. It should be recalled that the violence of the terrorist group Boko Haram has unleashed an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the area that has resulted in millions of forced internal displacements and caused many to leave their homes. The crisis has led to an increase in the number of people who are severely food insecure and deserves the full attention of the Security Council.

The report of the Secretary-General refers to a situation that is also of concern to my Government. The violent clashes between nomadic pastoralists in northern Nigeria and sedentary farming communities in central and southern Nigeria have intensified in recent years and are spreading southwards, threatening the security and stability of the country. Such clashes are becoming as dangerous as the Boko Haram insurgency itself in north-eastern Nigeria. Equatorial Guinea therefore urges Nigeria's central Government and local Governments in the areas affected to work together to take immediate steps to bolster the security of pastoralists and farmers, enhance mediation, conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding mechanisms, and initiate long-term efforts to reform livestock management practices.

The political tensions that various countries of the region are experiencing, in some cases as a result of internal disagreements or electoral disputes, must always be addressed by prioritizing a peaceful solution through inclusive, constructive and objective dialogue between the warring parties, and, if necessary, with the mediation of international institutions.

The Council must also reiterate its full support for the communiqué issued at the ministerial meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council on the situation in Mali and the Sahel, held on 27 June. The communiqué highlighted the following, inter alia: first, the importance of achieving an early resolution to the crisis in Mali through efforts to ensure lasting peace and security in the Sahel; secondly, the importance of seeking a lasting solution to the long-standing Libyan crisis as a key element in responding to the situation in the Sahelo-Saharan region; and thirdly, its appreciation for the initiatives of the international community, in particular the regional economic communities, the United Nations, the European Union and other bilateral and multilateral partners, and their sustained efforts to promote peace, security and development in the Sahel.

Moreover, my country welcomes the collegial efforts of the entire United Nations system to recalibrate the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and further advance its implementation with a more integrated and cross-cutting cross-pillar approach. Such efforts will undoubtedly help marshal additional resources for the Sahel and ensure that the assistance of the international community is well coordinated and that it complements and supports the countries of the Sahel.

In conclusion, I should like to welcome and congratulate Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw of Mauritania on his appointment as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for the Sahel. Equatorial Guinea highly appreciates his efforts in drafting the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, whose main objective is to change narratives in the Sahel and mobilize additional resources and support for the immediate and long-term needs of the region, in line with the United Nations-African Union Framework for Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, we strongly call on the international community, the United Nations and all private economic actors to become fully involved and respond by investing in the Sahel.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would also like to join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas for his comprehensive briefing on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the progress made in the past six months in the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. We commend Mr. Chambas and his team for the excellent work they have been doing in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation and good offices to sustain peace in the region. We take note of the overall political, security, humanitarian and socioeconomic trends in West Africa, the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin during the reporting period.

On the political front, in several countries of the region we welcome the positive developments in the areas of constitutional and security sector reform that aim at improving governance and consolidating democracy. Furthermore, the conduct of peaceful elections and democratic transitions that were seen in Liberia and Sierra Leone have also been encouraging. The role of UNOWAS in support of the upcoming elections in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal will be vital for facilitating peaceful, inclusive and credible electoral processes in those countries.

On the security front, assymetric terrorist attacks, maritime piracy, transnational organized crime, and trafficking in persons, arms, drugs and natural resources continue to cause serious challenges. It is important that the Security Council continue to support the regional initiatives to address the impact of terrorism and transnational organized crime as well as strengthen border security. It is in this context that we welcome the efforts and commitments of the countries of West Africa and the Sahel aimed at fighting terrorism and transnational organized crime through the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force. We commend the Multinational Joint Task Force for its successes in the fight against Boko Haram in the Niger and Nigeria, thus reducing the group's operational capacities and geographical reach.

On the other hand, we have also observed the rise of piracy, armed robbery and other criminal activities in the Gulf of Guinea, which has indeed been a matter of serious concern not only for Equatorial Guinea and other countries of the region but also the wider international community. There is therefore is a need for greater mobilization of regional and international cooperation and for lessons to be drawn from experiences in fighting piracy and other criminal activities off the coast of Somalia and other important international sea lanes, taking into account the specific challenges being faced in the Gulf of Guinea.

Climate change, food insecurity, forced displacement, unemployment, inequality and lack of opportunity continue to threaten the socioeconomic stability of the region as well as its humanitarian prospects. It is in this context that we underscore the importance of complementing the security response with a comprehensive and coordinated development and humanitarian approach in order to address the root causes. In this regard, we wish to emphasize in particular the importance of stepping up efforts aimed at ensuring the full implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. We welcome the recalibration of the Strategy, in line with the needs of the people of the Sahel and with national and regional priorities, in close collaboration with partners and countries of the region through the development of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. We also welcome the appointment of Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw as the Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Sahel and his efforts in the development of the United Nation Support Plan in working towards changing the narratives on the Sahel as well as in mobilizing further resources and support for the region's immediate and long-term needs.

Of course it would have been useful if we had had the opportunity to hear the African Union perspective today. The African Union has stressed the need for African ownership of initiatives in favour of the countries of the Sahel countries and reaffirmed the

importance of the Nouakchott process in the promotion of peace and security in the Sahel-Saharan region. In this context, strategic consultations were held in Nouakchott, within the framework of the efforts aimed at harmonizing the various initiatives and promoting a shared strategic vision for facing the challenges in the region. The African Union Peace and Security Council also met at the ministerial level in Nouakchott and adopted important decisions in this regard.

Finally, the coordination of efforts with the African Union on the Sahel is of absolute importance in the light of the foregoing developments, and we hope that we will have another opportunity to hear from the African Union, although we understand today that we were not able to do so for various reasons.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas for his insightful briefing on the Secretary-General's semi-annual report on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and recent developments in West Africa and the Sahel (S/2018/649). I would like to express my appreciation for Mr. Chambas's important contribution, as well as that of UNOWAS, to advancing peace and security throughout a vast region.

We also commend the close cooperation with regional and subregional actors, which is extremely vital to having an effective impact. Such collaborative efforts have yielded the latest positive political and economic developments that we have witnessed in West Africa. In this vein, we call upon UNOWAS to continue its work on strengthening post-electoral stability and drawing close attention to the upcoming elections across the region. At the same time, several challenges, including the increasing threat of terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel, with their linkages to transnational organized crime, continue to affect stability in the region.

Kazakhstan welcomes an increase in national and regional ownership of the issues and fully supports regional initiatives to address the foregoing threats through the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force. My delegation therefore commends the international partners for mobilizing financial support for these initiatives.

At the same time, we echo the report's recommendation on the need for strong counter-terrorism efforts to be fully compliant with international law, ensuring that operations are aligned with broader regional initiatives and that they do not harm local populations. Other growing concerns are the increasing threat of conflict between farmers and herders, aggravated by the effects of climate change, food insecurity, forced displacement, rapid population growth and weak governance. Our delegation believes that in order to effectively address these issues, a military approach and humanitarian assistance should go hand in hand with development efforts in an integrated, complex and well-coordinated manner reinforced by long-term sustainable funding.

Our efforts need to be focused on the structural drivers of instability by reducing poverty, providing basic services, creating better opportunities for education and employment, strengthening local governance and mitigating the impact of climate change. While we welcome United Nations reform on repositioning the development system with greater coordination among various United Nations agencies, we now have to go further and increase coordination at the regional level so as to advance peace and development on a comprehensive and efficient basis. We therefore welcome the continued efforts of the Economic Community of West African States to advance the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, including through the development of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, and stress the importance of developing a similar integrated approach for the Lake Chad Basin region.

Finally, we underscore the importance of promoting the meaningful inclusion of women and the effective integration of young people in political and developmental processes. Kazakhstan will continue to work together was the Security Council and key actors to find a solution for lasting peace in West Africa and the Sahel.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): Putting prevention up front is one of the main priorities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, because in sustaining peace, conflict prevention is key, and with regard to conflict prevention, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) is playing a crucial role in the region.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report on UNOWAS (S/2018/649), in which the activities were described and recommendations were

presented. We would also like to warmly thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas for briefing the Security Council today.

UNOWAS is contributing to conflict prevention in many ways. Please allow me to highlight three aspects that the Kingdom of the Netherlands considers particularly critical: regional cooperation; early warning and early action; and the good offices role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas.

First, with regard to regional cooperation, security risks transcend borders and so should cooperation to curb them. We applaud the work of UNOWAS in ensuring that conflicts are approached from a regional perspective. We also welcome the positive steps taken to strengthen security cooperation in the region, and we join the Secretary-General in commending in particular the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in that regard.

Regional and national efforts are essential to peace and security, yet they should not be limited to a military approach. To sustain security, properly addressing governance deficits and justice is equally important. I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for putting an emphasis on the rule of law in his briefing earlier today. Accountability, participation and inclusive dialogue are also imperative in paving the way to sustainable peace.

The efficiency and legitimacy of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force depends not only on its swift ability to respond, but also on the implementation of its compliance framework. Moreover, as the European Union recently highlighted, there is great need to step up support to the national justice sector, as well as for regional judicial cooperation. That alone will allow for the transfer of suspects and evidence between jurisdictions and ensure due process.

In addition to enhanced regional cooperation, we applaud the efforts of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and UNOWAS to strengthen collaboration beyond their mandates, connecting the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States. We look forward to a successful summit at the end of this month.

Secondly, with regard to early warning and early action, we congratulate Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas on the handbook on conflict analysis and welcome the cross-sectoral conflict analyses of UNOWAS. Those are important tools in signalling threats to stability and security. The attention UNOWAS is paying to conflicts between pastoralists and farmers is particularly valuable, especially against the backdrop of terrorist groups and criminal networks increasing their cooperation in the region. As the Secretary-General states, those are becoming multidimensional threats affecting the entire subregion. We support his call on ECOWAS and its member States to find sustainable solutions to that challenge.

As a threat multiplier, climate change intensifies tensions between farmers and herders. It should be taken into account as a root cause, as Ms. Hindou Ibrahim of the International Indigenous People Forum on Climate Change so passionately argued last week in the Council (see S/PV.8307). We encourage the United Nations to develop the necessary risk analysis and assessment capacity on climate-related security risks at Headquarters and on the ground in order to provide to timely warnings to the Security Council and adapt stabilization, humanitarian and development programmes if necessary.

Thirdly and lastly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas plays a crucial role in using the good offices of the Secretary-General in the region. We commend his efforts and those of UNOWAS as a whole, often in cooperation with ECOWAS.

In January, we discussed the importance of peaceful and inclusive elections in Liberia and Sierra Leone (see S/PV.8156). Six months later, we have witnessed positive developments in terms of peaceful democratic elections and transitions in both countries. We commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas for his crucial role in facilitating political dialogue and ensuring peaceful transitions of power. We welcome the continued use of the good offices of the regional Office in view of the sustaining peace agenda, in particular following the exit of country-specific United Nations missions. Furthermore, we support the Secretary-General's recommendations to enhance political dialogue between communities through national peace architectures. Facilitating political dialogue is particularly important given the several upcoming elections in the region.

In conclusion, whether it is regional cooperation and the rule of law, early warning and early action, or using the good offices of the Secretary-General, they all contribute to peace and stability. UNOWAS deserves the full support of the Council in its activities. The Kingdom of the Netherlands expresses its gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas for his leadership and efforts and to his staff for their outstanding work.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.